



Environmental Fact Sheet

EPA RELEASES RCRA HAZARDOUS WASTE MINIMIZATION NATIONAL PLAN

Background

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), as amended by the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1994 (HSWA), emphasizes a national policy that focuses on reducing or eliminating the generation of hazardous waste, rather than managing waste after it is generated. The Pollution Prevention Act of 1991 further underscored the need for preventing pollution at its source.

The Draft Hazardous Waste Minimization and Combustion Strategy announced by EPA in May of 1993 called for reducing the amount of hazardous waste generated nationally through the establishment of a strong preference for source reduction and environmentally sound recycling over waste management. And, in May of 1994, EPA released the Draft RCRA Waste Minimization National Plan, which proposed a series of initiatives to reduce the amount of hazardous waste destined for combustion, and proposed a longer-term effort to minimize the

generation of all RCRA hazardous wastes. Additionally, an announcement of the availability of a draft methodology for setting source reduction priorities was published in the Federal Register on August 12, 1994.

Action

Today, EPA is releasing the final Hazardous Waste Minimization National Plan. The National Plan reflects input from an extensive outreach effort to public interest and community groups, citizens, industry, State and Federal regulators, and technical experts.

Goals of the Hazardous Waste Minimization Plan

The Plan sets national goals for reducing constituents in hazardous waste that are persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic by 25% by the year 2000 and by 50% by the year 2005. It also calls for ensuring that these constituents are reduced

at the source whenever possible, and when not possible, that they are recycled in an environmentally sound manner.

While these goals are national, EPA expects that generators, whose hazardous wastes contain these constituents, have flexibility to set their own individual facility goals and baseline years and measure their own progress in a manner that is tailored to the facility involved.

Implementation of the Plan

The Plan reflects the recognition that in order to achieve its goals, EPA must allow States and industry the flexibility to identify those actions that will result in the greatest source reduction and recycling of the constituents of concern. The Plan also recognizes the need to promote accountability and the tracking of progress.

The Plan details a set of objectives that reflect five common, recurring themes raised by those who participated in discussions and/or provided comments on the Draft Plan. EPA's actions to implement these objectives include a combination of voluntary, regulatory, and institutional mechanisms. Specific action items are outlined in the Plan. The Plan also provides a set of initial national priorities for metals contained in hazardous waste that are combusted as a point of departure for EPA, the States, and industry to begin focusing on source reduction and environmentally sound recycling.

The Five Objectives in the National Plan are:

Objective 1: Develop a framework for setting national priorities; identify constituents of concern and develop flexible screening tools for identifying priorities at individual facilities.

Objective 2: Promote multimedia environmental benefits and prevent cross-media transfers.

Objective 3: Demonstrate a strong preference for source reduction; shift attention to the nation's hazardous waste generators to reduce hazardous waste generation at its source.

Objective 4: Clearly define and track progress; promote accountability for EPA, states and industry.

Objective 5: Involve citizens in waste minimization implementation decisions.

Contact

For additional information or to order a copy of the RCRA Hazardous Waste Minimization National Plan, contact the RCRA Hotline, Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. EST. The national toll-free number is (800) 424-9346; TDD (800) 553-7672 (hearing impaired); in Washington, D.C., the number is (703)412-9810, TDD (703) 412-3323.